(b) Besides, continuous surveillance and patrolling by the Indian Coast Guard/Indian Navy Ships along the coast in this area fishermen are advised by Coast Guard ships on patrol through community Interaction programmes not to cross the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) into Sri Lankan Waters. However, there are few instances of fishing boats crossing the IMBL for lucrative fish catch.

(c) A total number of 1452 fishermen were apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy since January, 2008. All the fishermen have been released after intervention by India's High Commission in Colombo with Sri Lankan Authorities.

Shortage of manpower in armed forces

†949. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacant posts of officers and soldiers in air force, navy and army at present;

(b) the reasons therefore;

(c) the number of military officers who have been taken voluntary retirement during the last five years; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to meet the shortage of officers and soldiers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY) : (a) to (d) The information about service-wise shortage of officers and soldiers can not be disclosed in the interest of national security.

Some of the major reasons for shortage of officers and soldiers are pay scales being on the lower side in comparison with the counterparts in the private sector; conditions of service being far more difficult as compared to other Government Organizations; terms and conditions of service not being commensurate with pay, status and cadre inability; disrupted family life and education of children along with shortage of accommodation.

The force-wise details of officers who have taken voluntary retirement during the last five year are as under:-

Year	Army	Navy	Air Force
2004	290	115	244
2005	365	168	175
2006	464	178	87
2007	608	209	112
2008	579	172	113

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The details of steps taken by the Government to meet the shortage of officers and soldiers are as under:-

(i) Steps are being taken to make short service commission more attractive.

(ii) Officers are being offered courses at various institutes to enhance their professional training to ensure that they are adequately equipped for a second career, post retirement.

(iii) Undertaking the married accommodation project for overcoming the shortage of secure family accommodation.

(iv) Image projection campaigns undertaken and activities such as Motivational lectures etc. are carried out to encourage youngsters to join the defence forces.

Possible danger of attack on Indian merchant ship

†950. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that warships have been dispatched to sea near Africa;

(b) if so, the purpose of the same;

(c) whether the news about the possible attack on any Indian merchant ship is true; and

(d) if so, the details of countries' whose people pose this threat?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY) : (a) to (d) Warship of the Indian Navy has been deployed in the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy patrol. The ship patrols the normal route followed by Indian flagged merchant vessels during their passage through the Gulf of Aden. The presence of Indian Navy in the area is expected to help protect the country's sea-borne trade and instil confidence in the sea-faring community, as well as to function as a deterrent for pirates.

There was an attempt of piracy on Indian Flag cargo vessel, MV Jag Arnav, on the 11th November, 2008, which was successfully repulsed by Indian Navy Ship (INS) Tabar.

Pirate gangs are operating along the coastline of Somalia in Gulf of Aden and are reported to belong to Somalia.

One rank one pension for Defence personnel

†951. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ex-servicemen are demanding one rank one pension;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether defence personnel have rejected the recommendations of Sixth Pay Commission; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.